

Utilities water system video and employee newsletter win international and local awards

The Norfolk Department of Utilities was honored for its achievements in external and internal communications with two prestigious awards. The department's most recent video production, *Sending the Water Home to Norfolk*, won the Award of Distinction in The Communicator Awards 2003 Video Competition. *About U*, Utilities' employee newsletter received the 2003 Pinnacle Award from the Hampton Roads chapter of the Public Relations Society of America and the 2004 Award of Excellence from the City-County Communication and Marketing Association. These award-winners are products of the hard work of many individuals from the department's differ-

"Sending the Water Home to Norfolk" is a 13-minute aerial tour of the Norfolk Water System. With much of the film shot from a helicopter, the video takes the viewer on a 55-mile flight, tracing the journey of the city's drinking water comes from its source to the water treatment plants. Along the way, the video explains the processes the water goes through to meet the high quality standards of Norfolk's drinking water.

Nearly a year in the making, "Sending the Water Home to Norfolk" was conceptualized and scripted by Norfolk Utilities and produced by HP Productions of Vienna, Virginia.



Aerial film crew: (Lt. to rt.) **Curt Hauger**, Utilities Engineer, **Nancy Mraz**, Producer, and **Mike Audick**, Videographer, both of HP Productions.

Peg Nelson, Public Information Specialist, Curt Hauger, Water Resources Engineer, and David Rosenthal, Reservoir Manager, collaborated on the script, aerial shots, and filming locations.

The City of Virginia Beach and the United States Navy also provided aerial shots of the oceanfront, in-flight footage of the jets from Oceana Naval Air Station, and permission to film the ships docked at Norfolk Naval Station, all areas served by the Norfolk Water System.

All the hard work paid off when "Sending the Water Home to Norfolk" was awarded the Award of Distinction in the Communicator Awards 2003 Video Competition, which is given to projects that exceed industry standards in production or communication skills.

A part of Utilities' ongoing education program, "Sending the Water Home to Norfolk" has been incorporated into the department's employee orientation program, and it is available to civic organizations for viewing through the Department of Utilities. ♦

The front pages of **"About U"** have showcased a purple customized hot rod, United Way Day of Caring volunteers hard at work, Elvis in various stages of his act, youth leaders, and holiday celebrations. And all those stories were about Department of Utilities employees.

The formal name of the employee newsletter is "About Utilities", but early in the planning stages the staff adopted the shortened version, "About U", and it stuck.

Since the first issue, the "About U" staff has remained true to its focus on the reader, the Utilities employee. The contributors highlight the personal and professional accomplishments of the employees, congratulate them on jobs well done, and recognize them for the individuals they are.

In 2003 "About U" was awarded the prestigious Pinnacle Award by the Hampton Roads Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America.

In 2004 the publication won the Award of Excellence in the City-County Communication and Marketing Association's (3CMA) Savvy competition. The Savvy judges wrote the following comments about the newsletter:

"A tremendous answer to internal communication in a diverse organization. Norfolk's Department of Utilities achieves great results in its in-depth About U newsletter. Photos that tell a story and a strong focus on employees bolsters Norfolk's employee-led communication approach. The goals of enhanced communication, high morale and recognition of diversity are achieved in a well-written, sharply designed and highly appealing full-color publication!" ♦

